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ABSTRACT

This paper offers findings from a case study of western Canada's Tourism Learning System (TLS) initiative. TLS aims to facilitate possible adoption of a national tourism learning system, as well as adaptation of development principles to other industries. The tourism industry now accounts for more than 25% of the world's trade and nearly 10% of global employment. In Canada, tourism employs over 1.4 million people and includes over 90,000 businesses. But the Canadian tourism industry faces a number of significant challenges, including skills gaps, a shrinking workforce, an aging population, and immigration questions resulting from national labor shortages. The nature of the tourism industry and training in Canada result in a range of industries, ministries, and institutions each having a portion of responsibility for tourism human resource development. Education and training efforts conflict in terms of credentialing, content, and linkage. This document provides an overview of the need for Human Resource Development (HRD) planning; outlines the policy foundations that need to be considered; outlines the history of the TLS development process; analyzes lessons learned; and considers the possible application/adaptation of the TLS approach across Canada and within other sectors. (Contains 30 references.) (NB)

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AN ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN COMMUNITY COLLEGES
SPONSORED SECTORAL CASE STUDY

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AN ARTICULATED PAN-CANADIAN CORE CURRICULUM: ARE WE DREAMING IN COLOUR?

The Tourism Learning System

Prepared for the ACCC/TASC/CAETO Colleges/Institutes and Sector Councils Symposium
February 22-23, 2001
Ottawa, Ontario

By **The Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council and Capilano College**
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Before
You Read this Case Study

This document summarizes the experiences and lessons learned from 10 years of tourism human resources development policy work in Western Canada. We believe that this information will have application for tourism educators and policy makers across Canada, as well as for sectoral councils and educational administrators in other industries. Some suggestions for each group of potential readers follow:

- GOVERNMENT POLICY MAKERS AND EDUCATORS INVOLVED IN THE TOURISM EDUCATION AND TRAINING: We are pleased that that the momentum for development that presently exists with the Tourism Learning System continues in the west is now expanding to the rest of Canada. In working across four provinces and the Yukon Territory, we saw that each jurisdiction has its own unique circumstances and needs. The fundamental issues and concerns are the same, however, and through a cooperative approach, each province and territory can build on the 'lessons learned' of other jurisdictions.
- POLICY MAKERS AND EDUCATORS FROM OTHER INDUSTRY SECTORS: Sectoral councils, educators and industry leaders in other industry sectors have the opportunity to reflect on the lessons learned and the theoretical foundations outlined in this case study. Although specific HR issues may vary from sector to sector, we hope that parallels can be made that will assist in developing a comprehensive learning system that will further develop your own industry sector's labour force development needs.

Acknowledgements

Numerous individuals and agencies have been actively involved in supporting the development of this systematic approach to tourism education and training. *Ann Pollock* and *Barbara Mitchell* were involved in initial efforts along with representatives from the (now) *BC Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology*, the (former) *Pacific Rim Institute of Tourism*, the *BC Ministry of Education* and *College Hospitality Program coordinators*.

As the system started to take shape, many other groups and agencies became involved: the *Centre for Curriculum Transfer and Technology*; *Tourism British Columbia*; the *Tourism Management, Travel Programs and Adventure Tourism Programs Articulation Committees*; the *Secondary Tourism Educators' Group*; the *Industry Training and Apprenticeship Commission*; the *Western Canada Tourism Standards Consortium*; *Human Resources Development Canada* and the *Hospitality Industry Education Advisory Committee*. Twenty one *BC tourism/hospitality industry associations* actively participated in the *Programs for the Tourism Professional (PTP)* industry validation process.

As the System took hold in other areas, these efforts expanded to include *the Yukon Tourism Education Council*, the *Manitoba Tourism Education Council*, the *Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council*, the *Alberta Tourism Education Council* and their provincial/territorial industry, education and government partners. Support came through *Western Canada Economic Diversification*. Much of system development work has relied on the tools, resources and support of the national sectoral council – the *Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council*. National exploration and expansion of these ideas has also enjoyed the encouragement of Canada CHRIE – the *Council of Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education* and the *Association of Canadian Community Colleges*.

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— TOURISM HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IS
"...the single most important issue facing world tourism." *Conlin*

1 A *Changing* Tourism Workforce

THE TOURISM industry now accounts for over 25% of the world's trade and nearly 10% of global employment (World Travel and Tourism Council – WTTC, 2000). In Canada and around the world, tourism's ability to create employment, to spread skills, wealth, and innovation while stimulating sustainable community development is unparalleled by any other economic sector. Increasing the level and quality of tourism employment is a becoming a particularly important policy priority in most nations.

The tourism industry is dependent on a multi-skilled and well-educated workforce because of the very wide diversity of occupational tasks and complex interactions necessary to deliver tourism experiences and service to the customer. Despite the traditional view that tourism provides mostly low-paid, frontline and often seasonal employment, the industry, in fact, offers a higher proportion of entrepreneurial, supervisory and management positions than most other sectors (WTTC).

The Canadian tourism industry now faces a number of significant challenges in this area. These include increasing skills gaps, a shrinking workforce, an aging population, and immigration questions resulting from national labour shortages. The need to attract, develop and retain a professional tourism workforce that can meet current and emerging labour market challenges has never been greater. From five-star hotels to wilderness eco-lodges and from international conference planning offices to adventure tourism excursion headquarters, the focus is a common one: recruiting and retaining talented, well educated and trained individuals - from front-line to senior management, who will contribute to success of the business and the industry.

2 The *Purpose* of this Case Study

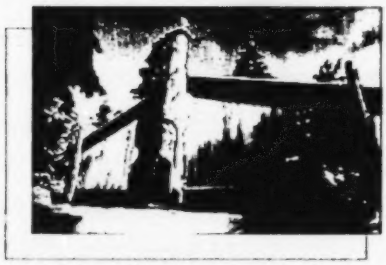
CREATING a professional tourism workforce is a complex challenge. The purpose of this study is to illustrate how integrated provincial education and human resource development strategies have recently been developed in western Canada to meet this challenge. Known as the *Tourism Learning System (TLS)*, this initiative represents a significant evolution from previous education and training policy.

To facilitate possible adoption of a national tourism learning system as well as adaptation of development principles to other industry sectors, this document:

- Provides an overview of the need for coordinated HRD planning and development
- Outlines the policy foundations that need to be considered
- Briefly outlines the key components of the system and the TLS history/development process
- Explains the lessons learned from the process of developing an articulated learning system in Western Canada.
- Considers the possible application/adaptation of this approach across Canada and with other sectors

In developing a tourism learning system, there are two critical issues that need to be taken into account:

- TOURISM LABOUR MARKET CHARACTERISTICS. The industry has traditionally been seasonal, lower paying, and composed of primarily small businesses often with high turnover. These characteristics are quite different than, for example, what is found in the health or information technology sectors. To develop a learning system that attracts, builds and sustains a reliable labour force for the tourism industry, is a formidable task when approached at the provincial level; nationally, the undertaking is more significant. The creation of articulation or credit transfer opportunities among programs, prior learning assessment tools for those in industry, and common core curriculum and standards are essential components of the Tourism Learning System but they do not constitute the whole thing. Supporting the notion of a comprehensive approach, our view is that there are nine interrelated requirements that provide a policy foundation for development. Therefore, if one requirement is not addressed, then the others cannot contribute at the optimal level.



- **HR POLICY FRAGMENTATION:** the nature of the tourism industry and of education and training in Canada results in a range of agencies, ministries and institutions having a portion of responsibility for tourism human resource development. In order to ensure a complementary direction is adopted, tourism hrd planning needs continuous policy coordination. Without this, agencies work with the best of intentions but in isolation of one another. Education and training efforts conflict in terms of credentialing, content and linkage. Confusion results for employers and students and the wheel often gets reinvented!

These two issues serve to define the process, development and maintenance needs of tourism human resource development. Adoption of the learning system in any other jurisdiction or sector requires reflection of its own unique labour market and policy development characteristics.

Although the tourism learning system has evolved significantly over the past decade, we cannot conclude that all of the policy requirements listed in section 4.1 have been adequately fulfilled in any jurisdiction and several challenges still exist. However, the need for a coordinated approach remains unquestioned by all stakeholders involved in Western Canada.

3 The *Need* for A Tourism Learning System

THREE current conditions have set the stage for the development of the Tourism Learning System:

- The tourism industry, globally and locally, faces several human resource issues such as changing demographics, skills shortages, recruitment challenges, retention issues and negative perceptions as an employment choice;
- In an attempt to address some of these human resource issues, many tourism education and training programs and resources have been developed - primarily in the last 15 years. For the most part, however, they have been developed with little or no coordination of effort and resources
- Recently, a number of provincial governments have been developing new education and training strategies focusing on quality, accessibility, affordability and accountability of programs.

Key Objectives

- ✓ To ensure high quality of service, competitiveness and productivity and sustainability
- ✓ To improve the success of graduates enrolled in tourism related programs
- ✓ To tie into the industry's overall strategic direction
- ✓ To provide continuous skills development opportunities for those already in the industry
- ✓ To help employers know what education and training is credible
- ✓ To enhance commitment of employers and government to tourism hrd

It is within this context that the Tourism Learning System was developed, first in British Columbia and then in other western provinces and the Yukon.

3.1 Human Resource Issues Facing the Tourism Industry

	2005
Accommodations	185,200
Food & Beverage	924,900
Adventure Tourism & Outdoor Recreation	90,000
Transportation	295,400
Travel Trade	49,300
Attractions	152,400
Total	1,697,200

Projected Employment (2005) by sector CTHRC, 2000

In Canada, tourism employs over 1.4 million people and includes over 90,000 businesses. Employment is projected to increase to 1,697,000 by the year 2005, a net increase of 307,000 from the 1997 employment level. The average annual employment growth rate for tourism-related sectors is 2.5% compared to the overall Canadian employment projection of 1.6% per annum. To the year 2005, growth rates are projected to be highest in the Food and Beverage, Adventure Tourism and Attractions sectors (CTHRC, 2000).

There are a number of emerging issues that provide context for the development of a tourism learning system.

- Changing demographics (population and age distribution, ethnicity, language skills);
- Increasing skills shortages in certain occupations and regions;
- New and emerging skills required by the industry;
- Recruitment, retention and unplanned staff turnover;
- Tourism industry's image as an employer – failure to attract sufficient school and college graduates as well as career seekers and changers;
- Rewards and benefits/compensation;
- Cultural and traditional perceptions of the industry;
- Education providers not meeting industry's needs (real and perceived perspectives);
- Failure of many businesses to recognize long-term human resource benefits in the face of short term priorities;
- Fragmentation of responsibility for tourism education and training policy; and,
- Recognition of the link between education and training with service and service quality.

**Adapted from Baum, T., Human Resource Issues in International Tourism*

With such a variety of challenges, an HR approach needs to be developed that takes into account and addresses these issues.

A key HR issue relates to what Tom Baum calls **"policy fragmentation"** (Baum, 1995).

Fragmentation is due not only to the often conflicting roles and interests of agencies but more often to the lack of overall leadership and co-ordination.

In Canada this is illustrated by the wide range of agencies often involved in some aspect of tourism education and training. As an example, a recent snapshot of the policy agencies involved in supporting BC tourism education and training includes:

1. The Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology (MAETT)
2. Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology (C2T2)
3. The Ministry of Education (MOE)
4. Private Post-Secondary Education Commission (PPSEC)
5. Tourism British Columbia (TBC)
6. (Former) Pacific Rim Institute of Tourism (PRIT)
7. Hospitality Industry Education Advisory Council (HIEAC)
8. Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council (CTHRC)
9. Industry Training Apprenticeship Commission (ITAC)

Other groups also have significant influence on BC policy development although they often do not have the mandate to enact it themselves. These include:

1. Tourism Articulation Committees; (eight program groups made up of coordinators and instructors)
2. Tourism Program Industry Advisory Groups
3. Tourism Educators Consortium (umbrella group representing the above – about 400 educators)
4. Public colleges, institutes and universities offering tourism programs (approx 20 autonomous and semi-autonomous institutions)
5. Secondary schools offering tourism programs (approx. 200)
6. Private institutions offering tourism programs (approx. 25)
7. Tourism industry associations (well over 50 – often providing professional development programs);
8. Association of Tourism Professionals

Other agencies also influence policy in tourism education and training policy, such as the Ministry of Health and Parks Canada (food sanitation training and responsible beverage service programs in hospitality and outdoor guide training and certification for the adventure sector etc.) but they are quite specific in their influence. No doubt a similar list could be developed in every province and territory.

Conflicting directions and priorities have resulted from the numerous agencies involved in tourism education and training policy. For instance, which, if any, agency:

- Decides whether there too few or too many hospitality management or adventure tourism graduates in the public post secondary system?
- Decides the future direction of the tourism industry and its human resource needs?
- Should be addressing the issue of turnover, or new language requirements in the industry?

3.2 The State of Tourism Education, Training & Credentials

OVER THE past several years, both the public and private sectors have invested in a wide range of education and training related activities. Tourism and hospitality education and training is now available through:

- Work-place based training (often using national tourism occupational standards and leading to occupational certification, developed through the CTHRC)
- Private training programs;
- Secondary school career preparation tourism courses;
- Public post secondary programs;
- Tourism-related income assistance recipient employment programs;
- Tourism related apprenticeships.

This increase in activity has brought the challenge of appropriately linking credentials in a manner that supports clear career paths. Other difficulties with program growth have been:

- Employers questioning the value of, not recognizing, or not understanding the credentials of job applicants (including both academic and industry credentials)
- Prospective learners wondering which training programs are 'credible' and will lead them to a job; and
- The lack of effective policy linking tourism labour market demand with the supply of graduates, resulting in public training dollars often being ineffectively allocated and effort often duplicated.

Much success has been made in clarifying credentials now available for both industry professionals as well as students, but, nation-wide, this areas still requires attention.

3.3 New Directions in Education & Training Policy

To appreciate TLS development, it is important to look at broader educational reform efforts. Recognizing the importance of education and training to the economic and social development, many provincial and territorial governments have recently developed new education and training strategies to address a range a related concerns relating to the new economy.

In reviewing these strategies, one can identify common themes:

- **Relevance and Quality:** to enhance current and future job opportunities for learners as well as to improve quality of life;
- **Accessibility:** to improve the availability of educational opportunities for people, be they high school graduate or mid career (removing barriers, encouraging alternative delivery methods);
- **Affordability:** achieving these goals within the fiscal framework available and what is affordable to students; and
- **Accountability:** measurement of performance for continual improvement.

*Adapted from *Charting a New Course: A Strategic Plan for the Future of British Columbia's College, Institute and Agency System*, 1996: BC Ministry of Education Skills and Training.

4 The Tourism *Learning* System: Foundation, Components & Development

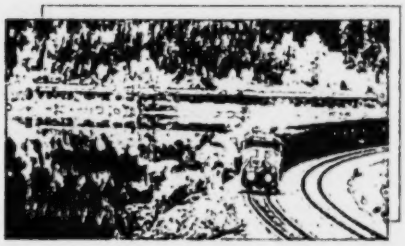
This section explains the importance of a solid policy foundation for learning system development, outlines the key components of the system and provides a brief overview of the development process.

It provides further explanation of the terms "comprehensive" and "coordinated" used in the previously mentioned Tourism Learning System definition:

A comprehensive and coordinated human resource development strategy for the tourism industry.

4.1 A Solid Policy Base: The Nine Requirements

TYPICALLY, tourism human resources policy as well as hrd policy in other industry sectors has based itself on a theory referred to as human capital, developed by Becker in 1964. Although still relevant in many ways, human capital theory tends to focus on labour market supply and demand, and does not take into account labour market characteristics. It also tends to place education and training in a value free environment, uninfluenced by HR practices.



The following nine policy requirements should be helpful in transferring the tourism learning system to other industry sectors:

The Nine Requirements

1. **A GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT TO A VISION FOR TOURISM HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND VISION OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY FOR THE LONG TERM:** 'Commitment' can come in various forms such as a commitment in funding, planning and coordination. It needs to be acknowledged that 'long term' attempts are necessary for developing and sustaining a workforce and that this is a continuous and iterative process.

2. **INDUSTRY/EMPLOYER COMMITMENT TO A VISION FOR HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND THE GROWTH MANAGEMENT OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY FOR THE LONG TERM:** Particularly in tourism, industry support is critical for a learning system to actually work. Commitment from industry can come in a range of ways, including implementing good HR practices, investing adequate financial resources in HRD, participation in training schemes and supporting local institutions with coop placements, serving on advisory committees etc. This requirement also argues that there is a link between policy planning for the industry and HRD, and therefore policy development needs to reflect that linkage.

3. **INCENTIVES FOR EMPLOYEES, EMPLOYERS AND STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING/LIFELONG LEARNING:** In offering education and training in all its various forms, it is important to answer "what's in it for me?", be it an employer, employee or student who asks. Some Forms of incentives are career advancement opportunity, improved salary and benefits, employer contributions to professional development, or other public recognition by the employer or the professional community.

   In some industry sectors, legal regulation is the method to encourage employers to train (responsible beverage service programs etc.) and in other countries, the incentive can be in the form of a training tax, that is accessed by businesses when staff take approved training.

4. **AN OVERALL COORDINATING AGENCY FOR TOURISM HRD:** This requirement attempts to address the need of policy fragmentation within HRD. Tourism education councils are typically seen as potentially playing this role. Several TECs continually need to generate revenue, however, and this role cannot be done without government funding (e.g. requirement 1) TECs do what they are funded for, and many are not funded for overall coordination.

5. **CORE TRAINING STANDARDS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES:** There are few if any major industries that have not recognized the value of standards. They support education and training that has career relevance, promote consistency between programs, encourage credit transfer & industry recognition and support the notion of professionalism. However, the question of the form standards take (e.g. functional or task analysis, content, delivery or output standards) is something unique to each industry sector. For the tourism learning system, core training standards (learning outcomes based) were

adopted. To provide flexibility for participating institutions, specialty programming and courses are often constructed around the common core. Occupational standards are also incorporated in the tourism learning system.

6 **Practical and theoretical training: recognizing the importance of classroom based learning as well as work place based learning:** This is also a widely recognized requirement, and can be included in coop experiences for students, apprenticeship or workplace based training models leading to certification. Theoretical learning may be the aspect of training that is at times viewed as nice, but not necessary, but for the individual to enjoy lifelong learning, it cannot be ignored. Innovative ideas, new industry approaches and changing values impact professional conduct and need to be learned in both the classroom and the workplace.

7 **Access to and flexibility of education & training:** a) links between levels of institutional programming (high school, certificate, diploma, degree) and from private institutions/workplace training to colleges and universities. b) Different modes of delivery to accommodate the lifestyle of the learner: Again, this is a well recognized requirement,. In relation to point a) this requirement supports lifelong learning, and recognizes the need for linkages between formal education and industry learning. Point b) aims to ensure that education and training is flexible enough in its delivery to allow accessibility to working adults and individuals from a variety of backgrounds.

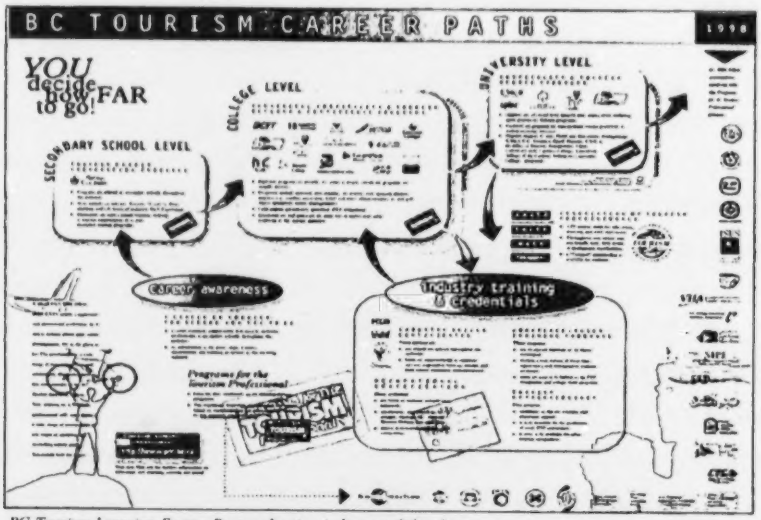
8 **Partnerships – Industry, government, educator involvement in HRD planning:** This requirement not only attempts to overcome fragmentation, but recognizes the tourism industry's need as well as responsibility for participation and buy-in into any planning. This goes both ways with educational institutions needing to be more responsive to the changing needs of industry. In the light of education cutbacks, innovative partnerships (and joint management structures) involving industry donations, internships, loan of faculty as employees, and equipment use all have benefits.

9 **Marketing – educating employers, government and employees on the value of education and training and lifelong learning:** This requirement is probably the most understated, yet could be described as the glue for the whole learning system concept. Marketing is needed to not only profile the value of education and training in tourism, but to profile programs to prospective students and graduates to prospective employers.

The Nine Requirements

4.2 The Key Components

The components of the TLS are the tools and tactics used to ensure that the policy requirements as outlined above are being addressed. This illustration shows how the different components come together to create one tourism learning system, as first developed in BC:



BC Tourism Learning System Poster showing industry validated core curriculum and logos of participating industry associations

Industry Endorsed Education and Training Standards:

- Core learning outcomes based on provincial tourism curriculum standards have been developed by educators at each level (secondary career preparation, post secondary diploma, degree) and provide consistency amongst participating programs.
- National occupational standards, tourism apprenticeship (based upon national occupational certification) and other standards based programs are profiled within the system;
- Industry validation of all core curriculum has been conducted for the provincial common core (through the sectoral council and the Association of Tourism Professionals). The designation *Program for the Tourism Professional* demonstrates the formal endorsement of industry associations, twenty-one of whom have been involved in validating four provincial core curricula.

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Career Awareness/Marketing:

- The diagram recognizes the importance of career awareness at the secondary school level and highlights the national CTHRC program (*A Career in Tourism: You Decide how Far to Go.*)
- The diagram is from a brochure (designed as a poster) that stands as the first provincial tourism systems information resource of its kind , outlining all the industry validated programs available - and showing the linkages between them;
- The development of this brochure also marked the beginning of marketing to employers of credible tourism related programming and credentials;

Articulation and Laddering:

- *PTP* tourism and hospitality diploma programs now benefit from a provincial agreement, based upon the core curriculum, that allows for transfer between colleges. They now also have full two-year block transfer to at least one degree in the province (through signed articulation agreements), and a number outside of the province
- All secondary school tourism career preparation program graduates, upon achieving the necessary requirements, can receive preferred entry into a college tourism/ hospitality diploma program.
- Work is underway to create a provincial articulation agreement template that will recognize graduates from accredited private institutions wishing to transfer to public provincial tourism/hospitality diploma programs.

Credential Recognition and Prior Learning Assessment:

- Although only at an initial stage, individuals completing occupational certification, apprenticeship or in house training may receive credit towards their diploma/degree;
- The current public-private articulation effort will set the stage for the next system PLA project - one that consider recognition of comparable management level education offered within industry.

Not indicated on this diagram but essential to the Tourism Learning System are the following elements:

Joint Planning:

- A structure allowing for HRD planning to be undertaken by all key stakeholders
- New program submission guidelines outlining criteria for new tourism program approval (e.g. labour market need, adoption of standards, work with other institutions, articulation, adoption of PTP core etc.);
- Joint funding of initiatives.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/COMMUNICATION AMONGST EDUCATORS:

- To build a culture of collaboration, an annual Tourism Educators' Conference (now in it's eleventh year) is held for private and public tourism educators, both secondary and post secondary. This event has attracted as many as 240 delegates and becomes the main yearly opportunity for system discussion and planning. The informal connection and opportunity to interact socially (between all of these groups and cultivated over time) builds the good level of trust and consensus essential for good partnership efforts.
- Educator committees, known as articulation committees, meet once or twice a year to discuss and share curricula and resources, address articulation and to discuss common issues. Eight now exist in BC, operating under the umbrella of the *Tourism Educators' Consortium:* Tourism Management Programs • Hospitality Management Programs • Cook Training Programs • Travel Counseling Programs • Adventure Tourism Programs • Secondary Tourism Educators' Group • Private Educators of Tourism and • Hospitality and the University Tourism Programs Group.

PART-TIME DELIVERY/DISTANCE DELIVERY:

- To provide greater access for those already in the industry, colleges and universities have worked together to offer part time courses that ladder into the provincial Bachelor of Tourism Management Degree;
- Distance delivery for this degree is now under development though a consortium of institutions.

4.3 TLS Development: A Brief History (1987 - Present)

BRITISH COLUMBIA

The concept of a Tourism Learning System has been influenced by a number of individuals and agencies over the past decade.

In 1990, Brent Ritchie, University of Calgary, and Ann Pollock, tourism HRD consultant published the article, "*Integrated Strategy for Tourism Education/Training*", which outlined the need for a laddered education system, linking secondary school, college, university and workplace based training. At the same time educators and government representatives in British Columbia began to look at the issues facing tourism HRD. BC's sectoral council, the former The Pacific Rim Institute of Tourism (est. 1988) facilitated a strategic planning exercise that resulted in *Tourism: The Professional Challenge - A Framework for Action* (Mitchell 1992). With an investment of over $125,000, *The Framework* represented a significant financial investment in tourism education and training planning and policy development - unequaled in any other provincial industry sector at that time.

The planning committee involved representatives of employers, labour, government and educators and close to 200 contributors. Taking over a year to research and write, *The Framework* represents a comprehensive document in terms of scope and depth of

data acquired that is still relevant to this day. The framework resulted in positive climate for change and was sometimes referred to as the "3 Cs" document - for the key recommendations of cooperation, consultation and collaboration.

This set the stage for stakeholders to develop a much more systematic approach to tourism education and training. In 1996, the document, *The BC Tourism Learning System* was released. Representing the culmination of several planning and curriculum projects* including those led by Barbara Mitchell, Geoffrey Bird, Terry Hood, John FitzGibbon, Lynn Pipes, Brian White, Dave Donaldson, Kathleen Ponsart, Bob Thompson, Dave Freeze, Jonathan Rouse, Don Basham and the Open Learning Agency (amongst others) over a period of seven years, the *BC Tourism Learning System* outlines the elements of the tourism education and training policy in British Columbia, in relation to curriculum, delivery guidelines, industry validation and articulation.

A key characteristic in the development of the learning system was the overall process adopted to build "ownership". Taking into account the issue of policy fragmentation and the entrepreneurial mindset of the industry as a whole, collaboration leading to endorsement was the required approach, as opposed to regulation and enforcement. This "soft approach" strategy was achieved through various means. For example:

- an annual conference was held for tourism educators, where professional development and learning system development were addressed;
- small government-funded curriculum projects were initiated, focusing on involvement of all interested parties and bringing mutual benefits to all partners;
- articulation committees were established, met regularly, and discussed specific issues related to articulation and curriculum development.

These kinds of events and activities (often facilitated by the sectoral council) the required collaboration and trust.

A series of small curriculum and planning projects that many could participate in helped to create the good will necessary for "ownership" of a common TLS vision.

The Pacific Rim Institute of Tourism served British Columbia as the tourism sectoral council for twelve years, and ceased operations in January 2001. With the support and active involvement of a number of partners, work continues on Tourism Learning System development and a new coordinating agency structure is being developed. It is clear that without a provincial coordinating function, the BC Tourism Learning System will not be able fully deal with the increasing HR challenges facing the tourism industry and to realize its full potential.

*Most of the funding for these projects came from the BC Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology and the Ministry of Education. All of the projects were managed through the Centre for Curriculum Transfer and Technology (C2T2). This agency has an agreement to manage the copyright and product distribution of these curriculum resources on behalf of the government.

Adaptation to other Western Provinces and the Yukon, 1998-2000

In the mid 1990's, the Tourism Standards Consortium of Western Canada (TSC) was created, with support from Western Economic Diversification, to contribute to national standards and development work but from a regional perspective. In 1998, the TSC launched an initiative to develop a Western and Northern Canada Tourism Learning System based on the BC experience. The TSC realized that the challenge of developing such a system is that each jurisdiction has its own set of issues and range of political circumstances that need to be addressed. Consequently, suggesting one plan for all was not possible. It was, therefore, important for each jurisdiction to develop its own Tourism Learning System, based on the theoretical foundations and with appropriate linkages across Western and Northern Canada.

Appendix 1 presents the Manitoba example of some of the planning work that occurredin each province and territory. Significant support now exists across Western Canada and the Yukon for a tourism learning system and individual plans are now in place. *Tourism, Contours of Coordination for Education and Training in Alberta (2000)* is one example of the original Tourism Learning System framework adapted to the needs of another province .
With the completion of this development project, no funding now exists to support this activity on a regional basis but each jurisdiction is considering the best approach to move these efforts ahead in their province/territory.

During the TSC project, two workshops were held to help create linkages across Western and Northern Canada, in Kelowna in 1999 and in Vancouver in 2000. The Vancouver event was expanded to include a significant number of Central and Eastern Canada college and university representatives. Several outcomes resulted from this last workshop:

- The process of moving towards the creation of a coordinated Tourism Learning System on a national basis was supported by the group
- Recommendation for an annual national TLS forum for tourism educators was proposed. As mentioned in the BC profile, this has been found to be important in order to build trust and to continue the process. Furthermore, a regular exchange of course outlines, best practices, and faculty across the country is valuable and encouraged. Canada CHRIE (Council of Hospitality, Restaurant, and Institutional Educators) and the CTHRC were encouraged to consider supporting this ongoing event (Both of these agencies are now using internet technology with affinity groups and listserves to promote this discussion amongst tourism educators across the country. This has proven to be every effective.).
- Regular core curricula review is important in order to ensure quality assurance and relevance
- The issue of advocacy, profile, commitment, and funding for Tourism Learning System work needs to be addressed in each jurisdiction. Each tourism sectoral council and Department/Ministry of Education should place this as a high priority – in terms of their ability to positively influence tourism education and training efforts.

The Current Status: Interest Grows Across Canada

The encouraging results of the Vancouver, 2000 workshop have led to an increase in momentum regarding national interest in TLS development.

Over the past decade, the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council has invested considerable resources into the production of a wide range of industry-developed standards, training resources and occupatienal certification. These are serving the tourism work force well and are constantly being reviewed and enhanced. The Council is now also supporting national TLS development as a way to ensure that these efforts are built upon and connect effectively to other tourism education & training programs and credentials across the country.

The Council (with Canada CHRIE) is now hosting an annual national Tourism Educators' Forum (Winnipeg, 1999; Moncton, 2000; Toronto, 2001). In 1999, the TLS was introduced as a possible national effort and received significant support. In 2000, an additional TLS planning session was held – attended by 100 educators from across Canada. Delegates helped create a discussion paper (*Towards a National Approach to Tourism Learning System Development*) that now points the way ahead for further development. Canada CHRIE (in particular George Slavinski from Ryerson Polytechnic University) and ACCC have been instrumental in encouraging dialogue amongst educators and promoting the benefits of a coordinated approach to Canadian tourism human resource development.

5 *Lessons* Learned

5.1 General

- **Financial resources need to be dedicated** to planning and maintaining a tourism learning system. Government Ministries/Departments of Education, the provincial tourism authority along with the industry itself all have a vested interest in this area. A Tourism Learning System is first developed and then maintained. Although components of its development can readily be organized into a specific time specific projects or tasks, overall system development needs ongoing facilitation. In the case of tourism, ongoing support is therefore required for a coordinating agency to carry out this role. Sectoral councils are in an ideal position to undertake this task, providing a clear mandate to do so is established.
- **Collaboration versus regulation:** Tourism human resource development planning has been based largely on trust, cooperation and good will. Said another way, there is no legal requirement for an institution, employer or government agency to participate in the tourism learning system. This may prove to be a weakness at times, but in the context and culture of tourism, it is likely the most appropriate approach. As painstaking as it is, it does lead to strong buy-in once achieved! Initial concerns relating to academic freedom and institutional autonomy have given way to an appreciation that individual programs can benefit from participation in a consortium approach. Programs in this voluntary arrangement still have the complete freedom to build innovative specialty courses and to market and deliver the program in ways that are distinct.
- **A range of meetings and events over the course of the year are required** to provide an opportunity for information sharing and gain input on learning system development. The meetings characteristically deal with maintenance issues such as reviewing curriculum and articulation agreements, but also with new ideas, research, and resources. The informal personal contacts and friendships established at these meetings are important for the sustainability of the learning system.
- **The TLS should be viewed as the overall framework** into which future funding requests are made, not simply another HR tool. Not only does this make sense for a comprehensive approach to coordinating tourism education and training: by doing so, we acknowledge that the TLS encompasses all that employers wish for and that funding agencies advocate and are willing to fund. For example, some agencies will support TLS efforts in terms of relevance and flexibility and others with a focus on credential recognition,

articulation and industry validated programming. Either way, the TLS can serve tourism education councils well in the future if planned and implemented well.

- FROM ABSTRACT TO WHAT IS TANGIBLE: Perhaps the biggest challenge is ensuring that the Tourism Learning System evolves from an ambiguous concept into a set of tangible projects (e.g. core curriculum, effective career preparation programs, industry validation process, working PLA models etc.) and initiatives. What is significant about the TLS is that it represents a significant departure from much of the previous work of the Tourism Education Councils, moving them toward fulfilling the mandate of coordinating *all* aspects of tourism education and training.
- INVESTING IN RESEARCH: Education and training can often be perceived as simply "the more the better." Research in the linkage between education and training and economic development tells us that the linkage is not so straightforward. The theoretical foundation is a first attempt to answer what is needed to strengthen the link between hrd and economic growth. Further research in this area would serve the needs of all partners.

5.2 Adaptation of the Tourism Learning System to Other Provinces

These comments are based on the adaptation of the tourism learning system that recently occurred in Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and the Yukon.

- EACH PROVINCE IS DIFFERENT: Each province and territory needed to take the theoretical foundation as well as the specific components behind British Columbia's experience and customise them to the local need. It is clear by the reviewing the process across Western and Northern Canada that this in fact was the case. After two years, each province has taken their own unique approach to developing the TLS, although all are moving toward addressing the range of requirements. As education is a provincial policy matter, a jurisdiction by jurisdiction approach is therefore needed when planning and implementing the tourism learning system.
- SOME PARTS FIT: Some components of the tourism learning system, such as prior learning assessment, industry endorsement, core curricula and articulation continue to be regarded across jurisdictions as priority areas. Work continues in each jurisdiction based on local priorities.
- SOME PARTS DON'T FIT: With regard to the requirement of an overall coordinating agency, there seems to be a divergence of Tourism Education Council mandates. As TECs are placed in a position where they need to think about their own survival and focusing on training delivery and away from a coordination role, the tourism learning system could run the risk of having no coordinating agency or "champion" in some jurisdictions.

- **Some parts are missing all together:** In relation to the theoretical foundation, some requirements are new and, therefore, require more commitment. Two such examples are the importance of marketing, and aligning human resource development policy with provincial growth management strategy for the industry. A coordinating agency however can provide the leadership to address these areas.
- **This is unfinished business:** Although we have made significant strides in developing the Tourism Learning System, there are a number of specific requirements that still need to be developed, completed and/or maintained. Areas currently being worked on within the TLS framework include Aboriginal tourism education program guidelines, a set of training standards for the adventure tourism sector tied to the TLS and an exploration of how basic employability skills can be incorporated into underpinning standards.
- **We are on the right track!** It is clear that we are moving in the right direction, that those who have participated in the Tourism Learning System have accomplished much over the past several years. Over 200 institutions in BC and a growing number in the western provinces and the Yukon have started to tie their programming efforts to the TLS. The system continues to gain momentum.
- **Collaboration toward a Common Goal:** Finite resources and greater employee and student mobility have encouraged us to move in this direction. Time and dollars have been saved by investing in system wide efforts, with each province also providing what they have accomplished to others - for example, several components of the BC Tourism Learning System have been readily shared with colleagues across Canada:

The Tourism Learning System —
A comprehensive and coordinated human resource development strategy for the tourism industry.

- Core curriculum for the *PTP* Hospitality Management Diploma;
- Core curriculum for the *PTP* Tourism Management Diploma;
- Core curriculum for the PTP Tourism Career Preparation Program (with the *Canadian Academy of Travel and Tourism*)
- Provincial Industry Validation Process;
- Tourism Program Development Guidelines (for planning);
- Degree block transfer agreement templates (to U. of Calgary, U. Vic, UCC, BCOU, U. of Guelph, Ryerson etc.)
- Provincial articulation agreement between secondary to post secondary institutions;
- Conference model for annual tourism educators' professional development.

5.3 Adaptation/Application of Learning System Concept to Other Industry Sectors

START WITH ALL THE STAKEHOLDERS: At the beginning of learning system development, it is imperative to have all agencies bought into the process. Although all agencies may not always be involved with every aspect of the development of the learning system, it is important to ensure that all are aware of their role and committed to the initiative.

TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE LABOUR MARKET CHARACTERISTICS AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES OF THE SECTOR: Each sector is different and therefore priorities and processes will be different. For example, a learning system in the health sector may use more of a legal regulatory approach for its standards and credentialing as opposed to the voluntary approach taken in tourism.

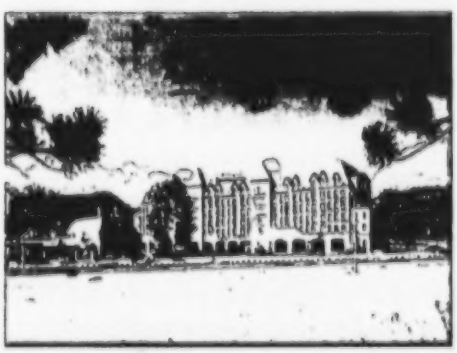
CUT THE TASK INTO 'BITE-SIZE' PROJECTS: The learning system can be seen as a daunting task. In the case of tourism, many of the components were developed with grants amounting from $7,000 to $20,000. Over time, and with a common vision, the various pieces fell into place.

6 *Conclusions*
& Possible Next Steps

OVER THE past decade, tourism education and training has expanded as tourism's economic profile has grown. Educational reform efforts (centred around quality, relevance, accessibility, affordability and accountability) have provided the inspiration for investment in the development of the Tourism Learning System. Significant program development has occurred in response to growing demand for managerial, supervisory and frontline employees. In rural areas, tourism education and training has emerged as a key retraining strategy and as a significant contributor to sustainable community economic development.

As was stated previously, the creation of a tourism learning system is not yet complete in any jurisdiction. There are several challenges for industry, educators and government partners to overcome in the development of the tourism learning system. As noted in the list above or below there are several challenges. Broadly, these include:

- Overcoming policy fragmentation and maintaining overall coordination
- Maintaining government and industry commitment to the learning system;
- Appropriately investing in curriculum development that supports the system;
- Ensuring portability of credentials between institutions and provinces;
- Marketing to students of the benefits of a career in tourism;
- Marketing of the value of tourism education (and skills of graduates) to employers;
- Better recognition of human resources as a contributing factor in tourism satellite account analysis.



The potential success in achieving these objectives rests with the active participation and good will of the various stakeholders involved in tourism human resource development. Above all, it will be the prospective learner who will benefit the most and who will in turn benefit the tourism industry and society as a whole.

Appendix 1

Example of a Strategic Plan for TLS Development: Suggested Objectives & Tactics for TLS Implementation in Manitoba

Western and Northern Canada Tourism Learning System Project, Tourism Standards Consortium, 1998-2000

1. **DEVELOP, VALIDATE AND IMPLEMENT THE TOURISM LEARNING SYSTEM STRATEGIC PLAN:**
   - Hire part time coordinator for MTEC (MTEC Executive Director to also participate in planning activities);
   - Initiate a planning session with senior representatives of the public post secondary system, government and industry to discuss the Tourism Learning System concept and to endorse vision, principles, objectives and tactics;
   - Establish Tourism Learning System Advisory Committee, to establish endorsement and ongoing support of the initiative;
   - Draft a Memorandum of Understanding between stakeholders to establish agreement to a common vision for tourism human resource development;
   - Develop new program submission guidelines for publicly funded tourism programs, identifying key issues to address (e.g. articulate with secondary schools, incorporate certain standards, etc.);
   - Identify priority areas for future tourism programming.

2. **ENHANCE THE RELEVANCE, QUALITY AND RECOGNITION OF TOURISM RELATED PROGRAMS AT ALL LEVELS:**
   - Conduct a workshop to gain consensus on the value of establishing a Western and Northern Canada standard for diplomas and other possible program areas;
   - Customize BC core curriculum standards for hospitality management diploma and tourism management diploma to Manitoba;
   - Customize BC's provincial industry validation process to Manitoba and validate programs (secondary school tourism related courses, standards based post secondary programs, etc.)

3. **DEVELOP LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE BENEFIT OF:**

   a) **Those already working in the Tourism Industry:**
      - Initiate a credential recognition pilot for workplace based training and occupational standards and certification to link with post secondary programming;
      - Explore Prior Learning Assessment possibilities specifically for tourism related employment linking to tourism related programming.

b) **Youth:**

- Conduct a workshop to:
  a) Set priorities regarding articulation (to college level, to the workplace, etc.)
  b) Identify ways of enhancing and expanding secondary school delivery of tourism related education and training;
- Based on the BC model, establish national occupational standards and certification as an elective credit in the school system.

c) **Diploma Graduates:**

- Participate in a Western and Northern Canada Tourism Learning System Articulation Conference in Novemeber, 1998 for diploma to degree block transfer across Western and Northern Canada;
- Participate in a Western and Northern Canada initiative to plan and develop distance delivery resources for part-time learning that ladders at the degree level (possibility of establishing delivery of third and fourth year courses in Manitoba at the college level, laddering into the BC Open University degree)

4. **INCREASE THE PROFILE OF TOURISM HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND THE TOURISM LEARNING SYSTEM TO PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS AND EMPLOYERS:**

- Develop and implement marketing plan for the Tourism Learning System, profiling industry validated programming and lifelong learning;
- Host a provincial industry/educator conference on tourism HRD;
- Increase the industry's awareness of the skill sets of graduates for industry validated programs
- Enhance awareness of occupational standards in appropriate courses in all management related programs.

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